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Voluntary Public

Date: 11/5/2012

GAIN Report Number: CH 1212

China - Peoples Republic of

Post: Chengdu ATO

Chongqing Emerging City Market Report

Report Categories:

Market Development Reports

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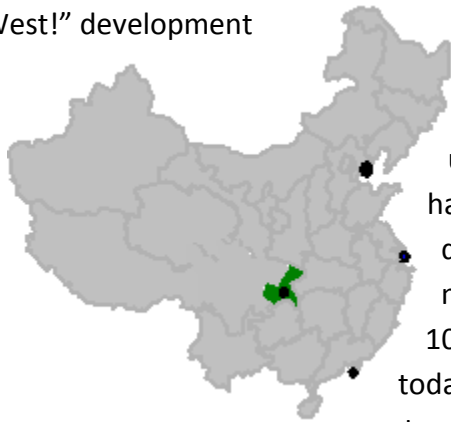
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Report Highlights:

Chongqing, China's newest and westernmost direct-control municipality is the fastest growing city in the world. Covering an area larger than the size of several European countries, the municipality is the largest in terms of area and population of China's mega-cities and is already a financial, logistics, cultural, and political gateway to Western China. As the city leverages new infrastructure and connections to international markets disposable incomes are set to rise rapidly, creating significant opportunities for U.S. exports in this emerging market. Although fragmented distribution networks still make it difficult for importers to navigate the supply chain in Southwest China, sales of imported agriculture products are expected to continue growing.

General Background

Chongqing, the largest and most rapidly growing of the four direct-control municipalities in China, is an important and thus far underdeveloped market for U.S. Agricultural exports. Sitting at the confluence of the Jialing and Yangtze rivers, the city has always been an economic, political, and cultural gateway to West China. Today Chongqing is a key component of the central government's "Go West!" development



Chongqing, in green, is the only direct-control municipality in Western China. The others, from the North, are Tianjin, Beijing, and Shanghai.

plan, designed to modernize and drive economic growth in China's vast Western and Mid-Western regions. As a part of this effort, the municipality has undergone massive infrastructure upgrades over the past 15 years. Even as the worldwide economy has slowed, Chongqing's economy has continued to grow by double digits, far out pacing other parts of the country. In 2010 the municipality's GDP grew by over 17 percent, much more than the 10 percent growth experienced by Beijing or Shanghai. The city today is in the midst of a building boom. Cranes and skyscrapers under construction dot the skyline, and every year more people and autos pack the city streets.

With a GDP of over \$124 billion in 2010^[i], Chongqing has the largest economy in Western China. Though less developed than the other direct control municipalities in the east, between 2006 and 2010 its GDP more than doubled, and growth looks to be continuing at a dizzying pace. Though the official population is listed at 28.8 million—nearly twice that of Beijing—other estimates place the actual population closer to 33 million. In 2010, the average annual disposable income in the metropolitan area was \$2,984 (19,000 RMB) per capita^[ii], a 68 percent increase from 2006. As incomes have risen, so too has the amount Chongqing's citizens are willing to spend on food. In 2010, over 37 percent of disposable income was spent on food, up a few percentage points from 2006.^[iii] As incomes rise and consumers are willing to spend more on food, the demand for high quality, safe, and nutritious U.S. imports will only increase.

History

Chongqing, today the largest municipality in all of China, has historically enjoyed an important position in the Middle Kingdom. As far back as the 4th Century BC Chongqing served as the capital city of several Chinese empires. During World War II, with the imperial capital of Nanjing overtaken by the Japanese, Chongqing served as the capital of the imperial Chinese government. It also served as the headquarters for General Joseph Stillwell during his campaign against the Japanese and the capital of

At the center of the city lies the Yuzhong district, and the Jiangbei district to its north contains many of the city's five star hotels. Equally important is Chongqing's Liangjiang New Economic Area, designed to foster industrial output within the municipality.

Jiangbei District

Situated in the heart of Chongqing's urban core, the Jiangbei district is home to many of Chongqing's five star hotels, fine dining restaurants, and upscale retail locations. The area is the most developed in the entire municipality and is also home to regional offices for major banks and financial institutions that serve the region. The famous Jiefangbei area, a Chinese take on a European-style pedestrian zone can also be found in this district. High end supermarkets Olé and New Century also have outlets in this district targeting the middle and upper-middle class.

Liangjiang New Economic Area

In June of 2010, the Liangjiang New Economic Area was established just north of Chongqing's downtown. Modeled after similar economic development zones in Tianjin and Shanghai, Liangjiang is the youngest of China's "New Areas" and the only one in the country's interior. The area covers approximately 1200 square kilometers, and is broken up into 10 functional districts. ^[v]

Chongqing's economic zone is designed to encourage the development of several key industries and to serve as a testing area for several urban-rural reform projects. Key industries targeted for development include rail transit, electrical power, automotives, information technologies, and environmental technologies. ^[vi] According to official statistics, economic value in the Liangjiang zone grew 20 percent two years after its founding and 108 Fortune 500 companies established a presence there. ^[vii] In November of 2011, the first domestically produced subway car rolled off an assembly line in Liangjiang ^[viii] and in July of 2012, approval was granted for an eight square kilometer Aviation Park.

Unlike Shanghai's Pudong New Area and Tianjin's Binhai New Area, the Liangjiang zone includes infrastructure elements already in place like the largest conference center in Western China and the first inland bonded port. Though much of the area occupied by the zone currently houses low-income rural migrants, the city government has repeatedly reaffirmed its commitment to relocation efforts and states that over 550 square kilometers in the New Area is open and available for construction.

Liangjiang is also well placed geographically. Aside from being home to the largest river port in central and Western China, the region also sits at the crossing of several major highways and eight major railways, allowing easy shipment of goods to every corner of China. ^[ix] Perhaps most impressive, however, is the mere 13-16 day transit time for products shipped from Chongqing to Europe. ^[x]

Infrastructure

Since becoming a direct control municipality in 1997, the government of Chongqing has invested massively in infrastructure upgrades designed to spur economic growth. The city has expanded its capacity in several key areas.

Airport

Chongqing's Jiangbei airport is currently the busiest freight airport in Western China.^[xi] With a growth in passenger volume of over 16 percent between 2011 and 2012, it is also the fastest growing passenger airport in all of China.^[xii]



Chongqing Airport after expansion
Source: aep-icom

As of June 30, 2012, 10.3 million passengers had passed through the Jiangbei airport, and the facility is on track to process 22 million people by year end. For comparison, in 1990 the airport only served 440,000 passengers and even in 2009 only saw 14

million.^[xiii] The government of Chongqing has committed to further development of the airport in order to bring it on par with

airports in Beijing, Shanghai, and Guangzhou. Construction on a third runway and a third terminal that is larger than the first two terminals combined is expected to finish in 2015, bringing annual capacity to 60 million passengers per year.^[xiv] Currently the airport offers direct flights to key international destinations in South East Asia, as well as direct links to Helsinki, Finland operated by Finnair^[xv] and Doha, Qatar operated by Qatar Airways.^[xvi]

Perhaps more impressive than the airports' passenger capacity, Chongqing has an extensive air cargo network designed to facilitate large scale industrial expansion. The government is currently constructing what is touted to be Southwest China's largest logistics center to the east of the airport.^[xvii] From January 1 to June 30, 2012, 129,000 tons of cargo moved through the facility on direct routes to Southeastern Asia, Europe, Australia, and even Chicago and New York in North America.^[xviii] After the planned expansion of the airport is complete, it will be able to handle 2 million tons of cargo annually.^[xix]

Rail

During the 12th Five Year plan (2011-2015) the government of Chongqing made developing rail transit a top priority. By the end of 2015 Chongqing aims to be the top railroad hub in Western China and plans to build eleven railways and to bring the total length of rail in Chongqing to 2,300 km.^{[xx] [xxi]} Of this, nearly 900 km would consist of high speed rail lines that, in most cases, would cut current rail travel times in half. The government has already completed a Chengdu-Chongqing line that makes a full trip in two and a half hours. The same journey takes nearly four hours by car. A high speed line linking Chongqing to Shanghai is in the planning stages.

Large advancements in freight rail transportation have also been made. In 2011 a rail line linking Chongqing and Duisburg, Germany became operational cutting the overland transit time to just over 300 hours.^[xxii] Though the cost of shipping goods along this route is more than one and a half times the cost of shipping by boat, without providing specific details as to how, the municipal government has pledged to reduce costs by 30 percent over three years, making the method more cost competitive.^[xxiii] The Liangjiang New Economic Area has also applied to be China's first inland rail port, and intends to expand upon the current Chongqing-Germany rail connection in order to become a European centered export center.^[xxiv] As more infrastructure projects are built the industrial base of Chongqing will grow stronger. As industry expands, so too will the middle and upper classes, and with them, the market for high quality American agriculture exports.

Highway

Since becoming a direct control municipality in 1997, Chongqing has built nearly 2,000 km of expressways connecting directly with 20 other population centers including Changsha, Chengdu, and Suining.^[xxv] This construction has expanded procurement and distribution networks for industries based in Chongqing and contributed to the municipality's rapid GDP growth. The revamped highway system also allows food distributors—particularly those who deal in imported fruit and produce—access to a wider range of markets.

River

Chongqing's location on the Yangtze River has been a catalyst to the rapid industrial development experienced by the city so far. It is also a valuable channel for the importation of goods, especially American agricultural products. With the completion of the Three Gorges Dam project, ships up to 10,000 tons will be able to travel to Chongqing.^[xxvi] The city aims to capitalize on this and has initiated five river port expansion projects in various parts of the city.^[xxvii] The country's largest bonded storage area is also located in the Liangjiang New Economic Area. Together with the city's rail, road, and air connections, its location on the Yangtze and development of shipping infrastructure make it a natural shipping and manufacturing hub for Western China.

Opportunities for Expansion

The city's focus on rapid expansion of infrastructure and commitment to attracting both high-tech and traditional manufacturing jobs is spurring development at a rapid pace. As Chongqing's economy grows, it is set to become "the Shanghai of the West"—full of high income consumers deriving wealth from manufacturing, finance, shipping, and other industries. As disposable incomes in the city rise, Chongqing consumers' hunger for high quality imported American products will only grow with it.

In order to capitalize on this surge in demand, it is important to understand both consumption

patterns of imported food in Chongqing as well as the complicated procurement and distribution networks that support this consumption. Below is an outline of this network and a description of some of the key players.

Consumption

Retailers

The retail market in Chongqing is unique amongst the major cities in China. Although Chongqing is the largest city in China—and currently the fastest growing—contacts at the Chongqing Retailers Association reported that the majority of growth in the retail industry is driven by smaller convenience stores. Nevertheless, international hypermarkets like Wal-mart and Carrefour open one to two new stores each year, and are expanding their reach.

Currently, chains and supermarkets like Olé and state-owned New Century provide the largest selections of imported products. However, the popularity of smaller convenience stores with the younger generation provides a platform for introduction of some products and the opportunity to reach a wider audience.

Hypermarkets

International hypermarket chains are an essential for imported food products in Chongqing. They consistently attract a wide base of price-sensitive customers competitive price points. This makes such chains ideal places introduce new products to a greater number of consumers to promote international products, and to educate consumers proper use.

In-store promotions like sampling, recipe cards, videos, and demonstrations are critical to introduce products, especially to-market imported products. Consumers are eager to try new, unfamiliar products, but if they do not find uses for the product the first time they purchase it, they are unlikely to purchase it again.

As in other cities, some retailers are known to increase the cost of doing business by charging slotting fees, shelf fees, and festival fees. Some retailers charge promoters fees to hold promotions in their stores, while others simply ask that the promoter provide the product to be given out in samples.

Supermarkets

Currently, State-owned supermarkets like New Century and Olé have the highest sales volumes for imported American products like table grapes, cherries, and wine. Both have stores in the upscale Jiangbei district of the city and cater to high-end consumers. Most frequenters of these stores are



Wal-mart store in Chongqing
Source: chinabevnews.wordpress.com

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already consumers of imported products and would be willing and able to try new imports. These two chains in particular have close ties with the local government and benefit from some local policies as a result. ATO Chengdu has relationships with both chains, and in-store promotions are also a key strategy to market entry.

Distribution

The distribution network in China is unique and can take some local expertise to navigate. Most distributors focus on a single product type, i.e. fresh produce, dry goods, live seafood, or meat, and are limited in the regions they serve. Especially in the interior of China, many distributors do not import directly themselves, and are thus reliant on larger markets near the port cities of Guangzhou and Shanghai to provide imported products. Because of the lack of scale inherent in this model, retailers and food away from home institutions often purchase from several different distributors and have less say in the international products they carry. So it is important to develop relations with distributors as well as retailers.

Market Entry: Opportunities and Challenges

Opportunities/ Advantages:

- Huge market with great demand potential for imported products with growing middle class consumers
- Retail market for imported products is developing rapidly and retail outlets are increasingly perceived as cleaner and safer than traditional wet markets
- Hotel sector receptive to imported food and beverage products
- Increasing awareness of U.S. food products and less competition than in developed cities
- Local residents are interested in trying new food products and open to adapt and incorporate new food ingredients into their own cuisine
- Food safety becomes the most important factor for food choice among consumers and U.S. products are valued for safety and quality

Threats / Challenges:

- Strong competition from both local products and imported products from other countries
- Limited importers/distributors or suppliers of U.S. food products
- Lack of importer and retailer knowledge and training in purchasing, handling and merchandising U.S. products
- Limited infrastructure and distribution, lack of stable cold chain infrastructure
- Distance from port cities
- IPR violations threaten product reputation and market share
- Impact of local trade policy changes

Market Entry Strategy

Imported meats and produce face the strongest competition from domestically produced products as

the Southwest provinces are major agricultural producers. Lack of dependable cold chain and the transport time from port cities is also a major obstacle. The majority of fruits, vegetables, and meat products offered in hypermarkets and supermarkets are locally produced. U.S. wine faces competition from numerous European and Latin American wines already present in the market. Post found that Canada, Denmark, and Norway are aggressively promoting their seafood products in both the Chongqing and Chengdu hotel sectors.

An effective way to promote U.S. products is differentiating quality, safety, and value from local products and foreign competitors. The growing number of affluent consumers in Southwest China are willing to pay a premium for a superior product. In response to safety and quality concerns, the presence of “green food,” viewed by some consumers as equivalent to organic, in the supermarkets has exploded. Superior quality and safety helps to differentiate U.S. products from their domestic counterparts. This is critical when competition is strong, as it is for meats, fruit, and vegetables. For this reason, it is important that the integrity of imported products be maintained throughout the distribution chain from port city to emerging city markets. Further development of cold chain infrastructure is essential for maintenance of refrigerated product quality.

Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) Violations Pose a Threat to U.S. Product Reputation



IPR Violation in China: KFC VS KFG

Throughout China, fraudulent labeling in the food sector is a problem, and Southwest China is no exception. An estimated 20 to 30 percent of products are counterfeit. IPR violation harms the reputation for quality and safety held by imported U.S. products and cuts into market share. Protecting intellectual property is a critical part of doing business in China. Avoiding infringement requires patent, copyright, or trademark registration with the appropriate Chinese registration office. Companies must also be proactive in pursuing enforcement mechanisms available to halt infringers.

Getting Your Product to Market: Local Distributors, Importer-Direct, and Regional Distribution Centers

Selecting the most suitable distribution method with regard to the type of product and target market is crucial. There are three main channels for distributing food products to Southwest China: local distributors that purchase their product from port cities and then sell their products to retailers; regional distribution centers, normally associated with a single chain retailer; and importer direct, when retailers often work with a referred importer to bring products in directly from the port. Within the HRI sector, regional distribution centers are used primarily by quick service restaurant (QSR) chains, such as Yum! Brands, Inc. and McDonalds, for purchasing and logistics. Importer-direct is

sometimes used by hypermarket and supermarket chains with less national presence or the hotel sector for specialty or highly perishable products, like some meats. Most imported meat is frozen.

Products directly purchased from port city importers and shipped directly to retailers or their central distribution centers are largely cash transactions. A significant quantity of imported products are purchased by local distributors from port city importers and then sold to the retail market. Most transactions with local distributors are carried out on a credit basis. Local distributors take on some of the retail risk by agreeing to the returns of expired or unsold products.

The importer (agent, distributor, or joint-venture partner) would usually take care of the customs clearance including gathering necessary documents, and submitting documents to Chinese Customs. Documents required may include a bill of lading, invoice, shipping list, customs declaration form, insurance policy, and sales contract as well as other safety or quality licenses or certificates.

Distributor Selection Important to Ensure Product Quality and Safety

It is imperative to determine that distributors have good cold chain facilities and shipping practices to ensure that product quality is maintained during shipping. Marketing U.S. products in China requires exporters to make certain that distributors are familiar with proper handling of unfamiliar imported products. Some local distributors have cold chain storage facilities with older-generation models that lack sufficient moisture and temperature controls necessary to maintain product quality on a consistent basis. Building close relationships with reliable distributors is highly beneficial, especially with the emphasis placed on relationships in Chinese business culture.

Labeling and Marking

Based on China's new Food Safety Law, effective June 1, 2009, imported pre-packaged food should have labels and instructions in Chinese. The State Administration for Quality Supervision, Inspection, and Quarantine (AQSIQ) also requires imported food items such as candy, wine, nuts, canned food, and cheese to have labels verified and products tested for quality. According to the Food Labeling Standards of China, imported foods should have clear markings that indicate the country of origin, in addition to the name, address and contact information of the general distributor or agent registered in China. For more information on import requirements to China, please see the annual Export Certificate Report published by the Office of Agricultural Affairs in Beijing.

Trade Policy

Import tariff rates in China are divided into six categories: general rates, most-favored-nation rates, agreement rates, preferential rates, tariff rate quota rates and provisional rates. As a member of the World Trade Organization (WTO), imports from the United States are assessed at the most-favored-nation rate. According to China Customs Order 954, the Administrative Regulation on Examination and Determination of the Dutiable Value of Imported and Exported Goods China Customs is tasked with

assessing a fair valuation to all imports. On top of normal tariff duties, both foreign and domestic enterprises are required to pay value-added taxes and business taxes. Food items containing certain food additives deemed harmful to human health by the Ministry of Health or food products from a certain high risk food contamination area or region are banned from entry.

Select Best Product Prospects

Interest in health, safety, and high-end gourmet products has increased with increased income levels. Consumers are increasingly buying produce from supermarkets and hypermarkets instead of traditional wet markets because they are perceived as cleaner and safer.

ATO Chengdu finds that these trends have led to opportunities for specific products. Health conscious products have been especially popular with the Chinese consumers. Red wine and olive oil have been widely accepted by Chinese consumers for example. Imported dairy products have increased in popularity following the melamine dairy scandal in 2009, but dairy products face strong competition from New Zealand, Australia, and European Union producers already in the market. Please see the following table for a list of selected U.S. products, competitor countries, and domestic competition regions / provinces.

| Selected U.S. Imported Products | Main Foreign Competitors | Domestic Competition |
|--|--|---|
| Red Meat | Canada, Denmark, New Zealand, Australia | Sichuan pork production, though lower quality |
| Poultry: esp. chicken paws & wing tips | Brazil, Argentina | Hunan |
| Oranges | New Zealand, South Africa | Chongqing, Sichuan |
| California Table Grapes | Chile, Peru | Xinjiang (seasonal) |
| Washington Apples | Chile, New Zealand | Hunan, Shandong |
| Cherries | New Zealand | Sichuan, Shandong |
| Breakfast Cereal | United Kingdom, Australia, EU | NA |
| Cheese and Dairy | New Zealand, Australia, EU | Domestic milk competition, little cheese production |
| Frozen Processed Products | Canada, New Zealand | NA |
| Wine | Australia, France, Italy, Spain, Chile | Xinjiang, Yunnan, Shandong; generally lower quality |
| Spaghetti sauce/tomato products | Italy, France, EU | NA |
| Coffee | Japan, France, South Africa | NA |
| Candy and Chocolate | Switzerland, Italy, France, Belgium, Japan | NA |
| Nuts | Iran (pistachios), Mongolia, | Xinjiang |

| | | |
|--------------------------|--|--|
| | Korea (chestnuts) Russia | |
| Seafood | Russia, North Korea, Canada, Norway, Japan | Zhejiang, Fujian, Little high quality competition, small scale farmed salmon operation in Sichuan province |
| Ginseng | Canada, Korea | Jilin |
| Dried fruit | France and Italy (prunes) | Xinjiang, especially raisins |
| Baby food/infant formula | New Zealand, Switzerland | NA |
| Premium Ice Cream | France, New Zealand | NA |

While there is strong local competition for meats, fresh vegetables, and fresh fruits, there is demand for specialty products, organic, and “green” produce. Imported U.S. produce could be successful if it is marketed as a high value product. U.S. muscle meats, as well as chicken paws, wing tips, and other non-muscle meats are strong prospects, especially if sold as a high quality, specialty product.

Hotels and high end restaurants use imported products primarily because of food safety and quality concerns or to differentiate themselves from the competition with specialty items. However, when comparable local products are available, hotels are unlikely to use more expensive imported products. Post finds that luxury or specialty products are especially strong prospects when reliable distribution networks are established. Food promotions that focus on American regional cuisine are promising, as well as food and wine pairing events. Demand from the HRI sector for Western products such as spices, condiments, and cheeses is expanding rapidly and few local substitutes are available.

Select U.S. Agricultural Products Present in the Market Which Have Good Sales Potential:

Soybeans

Poultry, especially chicken paws and wing tips

Nuts

Fresh fruits: oranges, California table grapes, apples, cherries

Dried fruits, especially prunes and raisins

Wheat

Breakfast cereal

Dairy products

Seafood

Spaghetti sauce / tomato products

Candy and chocolate

Baby food / infant formula

Premium ice cream

Coffee

Potato and potato products

Select U.S. Agricultural Products Not Present in Significant Quantities Which Have Good Sales Potential:

Wine

Alcoholic beverage

Red meat

Organic products

Frozen processed products

Ginseng

Specialty condiments / spices

Getting Started

Chongqing is a rapidly growing market that, backed by the will of the central government will continue to grow for years to come. These growth prospects offer an exciting and enticing opportunity for American exports. Because of the complexity of the Chinese market, this report provides only a small snapshot of the economic situation in Chongqing, however. It does not cover all market factors in depth, and we highly recommend that U.S. exporters interested in doing business in this municipality visit several Chinese cities and get a feel for the market first hand and to understand how it compares to other locales in the country. ATO Chengdu will offer our support with regards to questions about the market for U.S. agricultural product in Southwest area and can offer support in arranging meetings with appropriate local contacts. Contact information is included below.

Further Information and Contact:

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Web: www.USDAChina.org, www.meiguomeishi.org

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